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Training and Practices of School Psychologists

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TRAINING AND PRACTICES OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

ED. S. Field Project

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ED. S. FIELD PROJECT ACCEPTANCE

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Abstract

A questionnaire was completed by school psychologists in Nebraska and Iowa. Sixteen domains in the profession of school psychology were examined with regard to: quality of graduate training in relation to degree level and year of graduation; congruence between training and practice; and actual and ideal roles. In only the research domain did the results indicate that Doctorate-level school psychologists believed themselves to be more competently trained than Specialist-level or Master's-level school psychologists. Ratings of quality of training were higher for respondents receiving degrees after 1984 for the following domains: class management; classroom organization and social structures; interpersonal communication and consultation; legal/ethical and professional issues; multicultural concerns; parental involvement; research; and systems development and planning. Analyses revealed that congruence between training and practice existed in the following domains: affective/social skills; assessment; basic academic skills; classroom organization and social structures; instruction; interpersonal communication and consultation; legal/ethical and professional issues; multicultural concerns and personnel development. Subjects reported a preference to decrease the amount of time spent in the assessment domain, with increases desired in all other areas except basic academic skills. Implications for school psychology training and practices are discussed.

Introduction

There have been numerous changes in the field of school psychology over the past years and the importance of providing comprehensive services to all children is gaining significance. In the future, many practitioners may be involved in providing services in areas other than the traditional activities of the profession. The field has been criticized both within and outside of the profession about the limited role functioning of school psychologists.

There are several important issues which support that it will be necessary for the role and function of school psychologists to change and expand. First of all, special education reform has resulted in greater numbers of students with disabilities being integrated into the general education setting (Curtis & Batsche, 1991). Often teachers are not prepared to provide instruction to these children and will be looking for support from school psychologists. Secondly, school psychologists are now expected to provide services to a broader age range (Curtis & Batsche, 1991). Consequently, school psychologists must have skills to work with infants and preschoolers, and extensive knowledge of child development. A third issue, pointed out by Epps and Jackson (1991), is that the number of children with medically complex conditions are growing in numbers due to advances in technology, thus the survival rate is increasing. School psychologists will need to be trained to work with these children and their families.

Finally, information from the Center for the Study of Social Policy (1991) reports that close to 30% of American students will not finish high school. The number of unwed mothers is more than 300,000 and 13,000 teenagers are

dying from violence each year. These students are collectively categorized as the "academically at-risk." As these numbers continue to increase school psychologists must be prepared to provide services to this needy population. Each of these issues suggest that school psychologists will need to receive more comprehensive training in order to be competent in providing services to an increasingly diverse population of students, parents and teachers.

Several events took place in 1984 which may have influenced the time spent by school psychologists in the various roles that they perform. In addition, these events may have impacted the quality of graduate training for school psychologists. It is reasonable to hope that the graduate training received by school psychologists would be closely related to the services that they are providing in actual practice.

First, in *School Psychology: A Blueprint for Training and Practice* published by the National School Psychology Inservice Training Network (1984) (hereinafter referred to as the *Blueprint*), concerns were expressed regarding the necessity of a transformation in the role of the school psychologist. The authors of the *Blueprint* focused on the problems that school systems encounter, the problems that previous solutions have created, and the ways in which school psychologists had been misused in assisting with the implementation of these solutions. The *Blueprint* suggested that instructional programs and the curriculum needed to be modified to meet the individual needs of each student.

The authors of the proposed transformation suggested that, rather than utilizing specialists to instruct students on basic academic and life skills and

affective/social skills, it would be more beneficial to incorporate the teaching of these skills into the regular education classroom. It was recommended that classroom management strategies should be utilized with children experiencing behavioral difficulties; as a result, school psychologists needed to be prepared to offer training to staff to increase their knowledge of effective interventions. An additional role would include educating both teachers and students to enhance positive social interactions with special education populations. If school psychologists were involved in the domains outlined in the *Blueprint,* this would result in more time being spent working with regular education activities.

In the *Blueprint*, sixteen competency domains were identified as important for school psychologists impacting on the improvement of schools. These domains included: class management; interpersonal communication and consultation; basic academic skills; basic life skills; affective/social skills; parental involvement; classroom organization and social structures; systems development and planning; personnel development; individual differences in development and learning; school-community relations; instruction; legal/ethical and professional issues; multicultural concerns; and research (definitions of these domains are included in Appendix B).

Another event in 1984 should have impacted on the training of school psychologists. The document, *Standards for Training and Field Placement Programs in School Psychology* (NASP, 1984c) was adopted. In addition, an integrated set of standards, the *Principles of Professional Ethics* (NASP, 1984a), and the *Standards for the Provision of School Psychological Services* (NASP, 1984b) were adopted. Curtis and Zins (1989) suggested that this

consistency in requirements and standards should substantially impact NASP's influence on the field of school psychology. It was expected that the quality of graduate training programs would improve in response to the newly revised standards. The revised NASP standards emphasize the importance of providing comprehensive services to all students. This would suggest that school psychologists should be involved with both special and regular education and expand the services they are providing.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of the present study is to examine the quality of graduate training, the congruence between training and actual practice, and the ideal and actual role functioning, as perceived by practicing school psychologists. The first part of the study focuses on the academic quality of graduate training received, according to degree level and year of graduation. The second aspect of the study investigates the practical adequacy of graduate training according to school psychologist's actual on-the-job experiences. The quality of training and practice are compared to determine congruence between training and practice. A third phase of the study explores the actual and ideal role functions of school psychologists. This phase may provide information regarding the amount of time currently being spent in different roles by school psychologists. In addition, it may provide a profile of services actually being delivered.

Research Questions

The research questions to be addressed are divided into three sections. Section I focuses on the perceived quality of graduate training received in each of the sixteen domains (Note: These domains were selected because they

were outlined in the *Blueprint* as the sixteen domains in which school psychologists need to be competent). The research questions examined are as follows:

1. Does a relationship exist between the degree held and the quality of graduate training? It was expected that ratings of the quality of graduate training would be correlated with level of education (i.e., higher ratings from respondents with higher degrees).
2. Does a relationship exist between quality of graduate training and year of graduation? It was expected that quality of graduate training has improved since 1984 (i.e., the year the domains were posited by the National School Psychology Training Network and the NASP standards were revised).

In Section II, the academic quality of training programs was compared with on the job experiences for each of the sixteen domains. The specific question to be addressed in this section is the following:

3. Does a relationship or congruence exist between the academic quality of training and actual on the job experiences? If graduate programs are training school psychologists adequately, training and practice should be closely related.

In Section III, the actual versus the ideal amount of time spent in each of the sixteen domains is considered. The specific questions to be addressed in this section are the following:

4. How much actual time is devoted to each of the sixteen domains of school psychology practice and is this related to the ideal amount of

time? It was expected that the actual and ideal amount of time spent in each of the sixteen domains would be closely related.

5. Does a relationship exist between the year of graduation and the actual amount of time spent in each of the sixteen domains? If the 1984 *Blueprint* and the revised NASP guidelines have had an impact on the training of school psychologists it would be expected that less time will be spent in assessment by those graduates receiving degrees after 1984. As a result, the amount of time spent in other areas of practice should display a significant increase.

Review of Literature

Quality of Graduate Training in School Psychology

Ethical guidelines outlined by both the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP, 1984a) and the American Psychological Association (APA, 1994) clearly suggest that school psychologists should not provide services in areas in which they have not been trained adequately. Adequate training must be provided so that school psychologists are prepared to carry out comprehensive services.

A national survey of graduate training programs by Pfiefer and Marmo (1981) supports the idea that improvements have been made in certain areas of curriculum, practicum, and internship experiences. Furthermore, results indicated that graduate training programs place the most emphasis on assessment, consultation, and behavioral interventions, but research and program planning evaluation were gaining significance.

To determine their perceptions regarding the quality of graduate training, Graden, Christenson, Ysseldyke, and Meyers (1984) conducted a national survey of practitioners. Ratings of quality were highest for the area of assessment; however, there were several additional areas of practice in which they had received no training. These results suggest that responding school psychologists did not believe that their training had prepared them to adequately perform the job functions expected of them.

The previously mentioned studies were performed prior to the revised NASP guidelines and the *Blueprint* in which the domains of competency for school psychologists were identified. In order to achieve the goals outlined in the

Blueprint and meet the the current NASP guidelines, it is necessary for graduate training programs to improve and expand. The following studies have addressed the issue of quality of training since 1984.

Reschly, Genshaft, and Binder (1987) conducted a survey of the NASP practitioner members and university faculty. One area of this project focused on the quality of graduate training in school psychology. The results were similar for the two groups and indicated a need for improved training in the areas of neuropsychology and interventions in regular education for students with behavioral, emotional, and learning problems.

Costenbader, Swartz, and Petrix (1992) conducted a survey of a sample of NASP members, addressing the quality of pre-service training in consultation and the discrepancy between the actual and the preferred amount of time spent in consultation. The respondents expressed a preference for increasing the amount of time allotted to consultation. The most recent graduates rated the quality of training in this area more positively than those who had been in the profession for a longer period of time.

Reschly (1988) predicted that school psychologists would increase the amount of time spent in pre-referral activities and behavioral consultation in the 1990's. As a result, school psychologists must receive adequate training in order to be prepared to provide these services. He stated, "The question for most of us now is preparation and management of the transition: We need to improve graduate education programs and provide relevant continuing education opportunities" (p. 472). In order for school psychologists to expand the services provided they must receive the graduate training required by these

additional roles.

Entry-Level Debate and Training Standards

Entry-level may be conceptualized as the minimum amount of training required to enter the profession of school psychology. APA maintains that the Doctoral degree is the appropriate entry-level for the field, whereas; NASP endorses the Specialist degree for entry level into the profession. In addition, State Departments of Education differ on their positions regarding the certification of school psychologists which for entry-level practice. In order for school psychologists to continue to provide the quality services that are expected of them, it may be necessary to expand their graduate training, by focusing more attention on areas other than assessment, such as, pre-referral activities, consultation, effective behavioral interventions and modifications for special education students in regular classrooms.

The entry-level debate becomes less important when the history of graduate training trends is examined. Fagan (1986b) believes that previous trends indicate that there will be a greater need for school psychologists to be trained at the doctoral level. Research indicates that the number of school psychologists prepared at the Master's degree level is decreasing while those at the Specialist and Doctoral levels are increasing (Phillips, 1990). Brown and Minke (1986) reported that the number of students trained at the doctoral level had increased significantly during the previous five years and approximately 40% of the students in school psychology were receiving training at the doctoral level.

Phillips (1985) has suggested that in order to define entry-level, it will be

necessary to conduct research on job-related functions of school psychologists in relation to the characteristics of the profession. In other words, the question becomes: Does a relationship exist between the curriculum areas of graduate training and what school psychologists are actually experiencing on the job?

Graduate training programs in school psychology are influenced by several organizations, especially the APA Division of School Psychology and NASP. Both APA and NASP have well developed standards for the training of school psychologists; however, several differences exist between these two organizations. Most importantly, there are contradictions between their established positions regarding entry-level into the profession. Although APA only addresses doctoral-level training, NASP endorses the sixth year/Specialist level for entry into the field. The conflicting standards of APA and NASP will likely affect the quality of graduate training because institutions which provide training may choose to follow differing guidelines. As a result of these discrepancies, it is not surprising that school psychology graduate training programs are quite diverse.

From a comprehensive analysis of graduate training programs, Brown and Minke (1986) discovered a diverse range of minimum requirements throughout the graduate training programs surveyed. Many of the requirements did not appear to be meeting either APA or NCATE/NASP standards for training. Therefore, it is difficult to draw conclusions regarding the adequacy of graduate training on the basis of the degree obtained. Results from Brown and Minke (1986) indicate that assessment and intervention can not be used to distinguish Specialist in Education programs from Doctoral programs; however, graduates

of these Doctoral programs appear to be more competently trained in counseling/psychotherapy and consultation. Many school psychology Doctoral programs emphasize research; however, this additional training is not necessarily utilized in practice.

Zins and Curtis (1988) emphasize the importance of the coordination of efforts between APA and NASP in order to outline standards for all school psychology graduate training programs, saying, "NASP and APA can take a proactive approach (hopefully through collaboration) and attempt to influence future training or they can remain passive and allow such an event to occur on its own without the input of the organizations" (p. 44).

Other organizations which influence the training and education of school psychologists are the Trainers of School Psychologists (TSP) and the Council of Directors of School Psychology Programs (CDSPP). Although both organizations support the development of the profession, like APA and NASP, they disagree on many crucial aspects for the training of school psychologists. For example, they are inconsistent regarding their positions for entry-level into the field. In addition, they disagree about the area of emphasis for core curriculum requirements and employment opportunities of school psychologists. Phillips (1993) suggests:

> It is concluded that, as the diversity and specialization within school psychology continues to increase, these organizations may be even more important, as the main vantage point from which to maintain a sense of coherence in the education and training enterprise. (p. 91)

It is important to keep in mind that there are other influences outside of the

profession that may have an impact on the graduate training of school psychologists. To some degree public and political forces, as well as, fiscal factors may have an effect on the training and practices in school psychology.

Examining the challenges facing school psychology graduate training programs, Curtis and Batsche (1991) suggest that there is a need to shift the training standards from the "process" of training to the "outcomes" of training. Specifically they state, "Standards should provide criteria to evaluate how well a training program is preparing school psychologists to provide services meaningful to their clients" (p. 576). Standards need to focus on the effectiveness of graduate training programs in preparing students to provide services to school systems. Therefore, the training programs will be made accountable for adequately preparing graduates of their programs for successful entry into the profession.

Influences on School Psychology Training

The NASP standards for training and field placement were revised and adopted in 1984 emphasizing the necessity of providing comprehensive services to all students. In addition, the 1984 *Blueprint* perceived school psychology as a profession which would diversify to include expanded roles and functions in areas other than the traditional activities of the field. A position statement by NASP (1985a) proposed the necessity of identifying alternative service delivery models in order to maximize each individual child's educational opportunities. This position taken by NASP is consistent with the proposed changes outlined in the *Blueprint.*

Several views have been expressed regarding a need for the transformation

of the role of the school psychologist and offer support for the proposed changes outlined in the *Blueprint.* Cobb (1990) offers support for the proposed transformation, saying:

> In order to transform the specialty, there must be some consensus about the nature of our practice, the roles we will perform, and the necessary educational structures. I believe that consensus is emerging and reflecting many of the directions I have cited. References supporting this conceptualization can be found increasingly in the school psychology literature, but a few key items warrant mention. The National School Psychology Inservice Training Network's document, School Psychology Blueprint for Training and Practice (1984), identified the need for system change as essential to substantive changes in how children are served and how school psychologists practice. It also noted the need for an increase in school psychologists' applied skills in dealing with instructional, social, and affective areas. (p. 29)

The current system of categorizing special education students needs to be reconsidered. This would require more involvement in pre-referral activities, regular education intervention, and inclusive or integrated settings.

Reschly (1988) proposes a shift for school psychology from assessment-related activities for students to more involvement with designing effective interventions to be utilized in the regular classroom environment. Reschly (1988) states,

> The necessary revolution in school psychology is seen as involving a dramatic shift from classification of students or eligibility determination

> to design, implementation, and evaluation of interventions. Competencies for the new roles, based in part on traditional psychology strengths, need to be developed in the immediate future in order for school psychologists to remain as the principal representative of the science and practice of psychology in school settings. (p. 459)

Phillips (1990) criticized the proposed transformation in the *Blueprint* because it makes the assumption that all children with disabilities will eventually be mainstreamed into regular education. Specifically, Phillips (1990) states:

> The major problem with this blueprint is that it yokes school psychology to the mainstreaming of handicapped children. That is, it starts with the premise that handicapped children should be integrated into regular classrooms, and then calls for changes in school psychology that accommodate to that premise. (p. 234)

Despite criticism like that of Phillips (1990), the majority of school systems are accepting integration programs, which will lead to larger numbers of students with disabilities in regular education classrooms. Inclusionary educational practices are becoming more common, and school districts that do not educate the majority of special education students in the regular classroom are in the minority. Public Law 94-142, now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), offers justification for inclusion, although it does not utilize this term. Schools are required to provide special education in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Although this phrase does not apply to models of service delivery, it does apply to the blending of the regulation of special and

regular education and the concomitant funding.

A policy statement by Will (1986), at the federal level, identified several problems with the current system: the dual system of regular and special education; the stigma associated with students with disabilities; and the controversy regarding placement decisions. Moreover, Will (1988) suggests that the regular education initiative encourages school psychologists to become more involved with regular education by providing consultative and intervention services.

Bradley-Johnson and Jacob-Timms (1995) state, "If the new system functions without the contribution of school psychology it will be difficult to justify the need to maintain school psychology positions when budgets are tight and cuts are necessary" (p. 197). Consequently, special education reform demands changes in the roles and functions of school psychologists so that their services continue to be necessary and beneficial.

As educators become more accepting of integration, there will be greater reliance on school psychologists' expertise to assist in the placement of these children into the regular classrooms. Although the *Blueprint* proposes areas of regular education in which the school psychologist may be involved, it does not eliminate those activities that they traditionally perform for the special education population. In addition, it is consistent with the revised NASP guidelines which stress the importance of providing services to all students.

Congruence Between Training and Practice

Brown (1990) states, "It appears that a discrepancy exists between the relatively broad roles and skills described in NASP and APA service provision

standards and those day-to-day activities described by school psychologists" (p. 993). It is crucial that the training that school psychologists receive is closely related to what they are experiencing in actual practice. Phillips (1985) indicated that the relationship between training and practice provides information regarding the quality of training.

Results of research which has addressed the issue of congruence between training and practice have been contradictory. From a survey of a national sample of school psychologists, Meacham and Peckham (1978) found significant differences between the graduate preparation received and on-the-job experiences. Subjects were asked to rate their training and practice according to twenty-five skill variables. Examining mean differences between training and practice ratings, Meacham and Peckham (1978) found that areas of emphasis in the training were not closely associated with the skills which are utilized in practice. Fisher, Jenkins, and Crumbley (1986) replicated this earlier study and the results obtained were conflicting. As compared to the 1978 respondents, they found that the school psychologists surveyed in 1985 viewed themselves as being more competently trained to perform their job functions.

Actual and Ideal Amount of Time Spent in Various Functions

The traditional role of the school psychologist has given greatest emphasis to assessment-related activities for a small percentage of students within special education. It is well documented that school psychology practitioners prefer to devote less time to traditional assessment activities and more time to a variety of other areas (Hartshorne & Johnson, 1985; Hughes, 1979; Ramage, 1979; Smith, 1984). However, surveys conducted on the roles of school psychologists

reveal that the majority of their time continues to be spent in assessment activities (Hutton, Dubes, & Muir, 1992; Lacayo, Sherwood, & Morris, 1981; Ramage, 1979; Smith, 1984). Therefore, an expansion of the role and functions of school psychologists has not yet become a reality.

School psychologists' responses to a questionnaire revealed that present and ideal roles were for the most part congruent; however, less time was preferred in the area of psychoeducational evaluations and more time was preferred for group counseling (Ramage, 1979). In a national survey of school psychologists, Lacayo, Sherwood, and Morris (1981) sought a record of the respondents' activities on a typical day. The results indicated that assessment activities comprised 40% and consultation 33% of their day. In a similar national survey on actual versus ideal role functions, respondents revealed that they devoted 54% of their time to assessment, 23% to intervention, 19% to consultation, and 1% to research (Smith, 1984). As compared with their desired role functioning, there was a preference to decrease the amount of time spent in assessment and increase the amount of time devoted to the areas of intervention, consultation, and research. Also, it was learned that school psychologists committed the majority of their time to the special education population, but they would like to spend more time working in regular education.

The previously cited studies were conducted prior to 1984 when the NASP standards were revised and the *Blueprint* was published. The following surveys have collected information regarding the role of school psychologist after 1984 and are summarized in the following paragraph.

Several studies indicate that school psychologists continue to spend nearly 50% or more of their time in assessment activities (Smith, Clifford, Hesley & Leifgren, 1992; Levinson, 1990; Hutton, Dubes, & Muir, 1992; Reschly & Wilson, 1995). The results of these surveys indicate that preferences were in the direction of decreases in assessment, so that more time could be spent in intervention, consultation, counseling, and research. These results suggest that, despite the desired decrease in assessment, this decrease is not occurring in actual practice.

The results of the surveys conducted with practitioners are consistent with the research regarding the school administrator's expectations of the role and functions of school psychologists (Hartshorne & Johnson, 1985; Hughes, 1979; Senft & Snider, 1980; Thomas, Levinson, Orf & Pinciotti, 1992). School administrators will influence the activities of school psychologists and have an impact on how these professionals will function within the school system. A survey completed by superintendents regarding school psychologists' roles supported traditional child study services, in-service work with teachers, and counseling for parents and teachers (Kaplan, Clancy, & Chrin, 1977).

Senft and Snider (1980) conducted another questionnaire study of elementary school principals. The results supported that principals would like to see school psychologists continue to provide assessment, consultation, and screening, yet also increase the amount of time allotted to individual and group counseling, preventive mental health, and in service training. Similar results were obtained by Hartshorne and Johnson (1985); they examined the preferred role and functions from both the school pscyhologist's and secondary

school administrators' perspective. The results indicated that both groups preferred more time be spent in counseling and less time be spent with assessment activities.

Hughes (1979) found that perceptions of school psychologists and administrators were similar concerning the amount of time spent in different roles. Both groups preferred a decrease in the amount of time devoted to assessment, but disagreed as to which area to increase. School psychologists reported they would like to spend more time in preventive strategies, whereas administrators reported they would like to see more time spent in counseling.

Thomas et al. (1992) examined the extent to which an administrator's perceptions of the time spent by school psychologists in various functions is associated with their satisfaction with school psychologists. The best predictors of school administrator's satisfaction was spending more time consulting with teachers and providing instructional or remedial recommendations. The authors state:

> Should support for expanded and more diversified school psychological services continue to increase, training programs preparing school psychologists and offering professional development programs for practitioners may need to shift their emphasis and diversify their curricula experiences to meet these expanded role-expectations. (p. 574)

In summary, research conducted on the perceived roles and functions of school psychologists and the quality of graduate training has focused on the traditional activities of the profession. For the past fifteen years, school psychologists have reported a wish to decrease the amount of time devoted to

assessment; however, researchers continue to collect data on the following roles: assessment; consultation; behavioral interventions; counseling; and research. If these areas are not included in research activities it is difficult to determine if school psychologists are fulfilling other functions.

There is an increasing preference to reorganize the role functioning in the profession of school psychology. Therefore, it becomes necessary to conduct further research to determine if these professionals are being provided with the quality training required by these expanding roles. This study is intended to address the domains of school psychology which were outlined in the *Blueprint.*

Methodology

Procedure

A questionnaire was sent to all practicing school psychologists in the states of Nebraska and Iowa. The Nebraska listing was obtained from the Nebraska Department of Education; and the Iowa listing was taken from the Iowa School Psychology Directory 1994-95, published by the Iowa Department of Education. A copy of the questionnaire is included as Appendix A. Permission was obtained from James Ysseldyke, the senior author of *School Psychology: A Blueprint for Training and Practice* (1984), to use the copyrighted definitions of the sixteen domains to be sent along with the questionnaire. The copyrighted definitions are included as Appendix B.

In March of 1995, a packet containing the questionnaire, a cover letter emphasizing the importance of each respondent's personal views and encouraging prompt return, a photocopy of the definitions of the sixteen domains, and a self-addressed stamped envelope were sent to practicing school psychologists. In order to maximize the rate of response, two additional follow-ups were conducted at three and one-half week intervals. Copies of the cover letters are included as Appendix C.

Instrument

At the beginning of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to provide the following demographic and personal information: age; gender; graduate degrees held; date and place of graduation; type of service area; years of experience in education and psychology; years of experience in school psychology only; and employment status.

The remainder of the questionnaire was composed of five sections. In Section I, respondents were asked to rate the sixteen domains according to the academic quality of their school psychology graduate training. In addition, they were asked to rate the quality of their practica and internship, the amount of time spent in these areas, and overall graduate training in school psychology. Section II addressed the practical adequacy of school psychology training in relation to actual on-the-job experiences, and asked respondents to specify other areas which they believed were important to their jobs. In Sections I and II, the following Likert-type rating system were utilized: 1 = Adequate; 2 = Inadequate; 3 = Undecided; 4 = Adequate; and 5 = Very Adequate.

In Section III, respondents were asked to estimate the percentage of the actual time that they spent and the ideal amount of time that they would prefer to be spent in each of the sixteen domains.

Section IV was completed by only those respondents holding a doctoral degree relevant to school psychology, and asked for doctoral major and whether this additional training provided further competency. Section V was completed by only those respondents not holding a doctoral degree relevant to school psychology, and asked if they are pursuing doctoral studies or planned on eventually earning a doctoral degree; and if so, what would be their preferred major. Section VI asked the likelihood that, if the University of Nebraska at Omaha offered a Ph. D. program in school psychology that respondents would seek admission to it.

Subjects

Subjects were selected on the basis that they were practicing school

psychologists in Nebraska and Iowa. 514 questionnaires were sent; however, two could not be delivered due to incorrect addresses, reducing the maximum possible sample to 512. Overall, 382 usable questionnaires were returned, producing a total response rate of 75%.[1] Questionnaires which were incomplete or those which were not completed by practicing school psychologists (i.e., respondents indicating professions other than school psychology) were deleted, leaving 378 usable questionnaires for analysis, that is, a response rate of 74%.

[1] From the 512 deliverable questionnaires, 216 were returned for a response rate of 45% for the first mailing. Return rates for the follow-up mailings for the remaining subjects were 23% and 7% respectively.

Results and Discussion

Demographics

Subjects were identified as 156 males (42.3%) and 213 females (57.7%). The education levels of respondents were as follows: Master's (36.4%); Specialist (50.1%); and Doctoral (13.5%). The average age of respondents was 42.68 years, with a range of 25 to 71 years. The percentage of subjects serving rural, suburban, and urban areas were 52.7%, 20.6%, and 26.7% respectively. As for employment, 88.6% of the responding school psychologists were employed full-time and 11.4% were employed part-time. The certification status of respondents was as follows: full (88.1%); provisional (11.4%); and none (.5%). The average number of years of experience in psychology of participants was 11.95 years, with a range of 1 to 39 years. A summary of the demographic characteristics of the respondents is provided in Table I.

Chi-square analyses were performed to determine if gender was related to age, degree, service area, and year of graduation. Significant differences were found for age ($x^2 = 29.19$; df = 8; $p<.001$), degree ($x^2 = 21.29$; df = 6; $p<.001$), and year of graduation ($x^2 = 15.88$; df = 2; $p<.001$). There were more females than males for each age group with the exception of the 50-59 year old group, in which there were a greater number of males. Approximately equal numbers of females and males were trained at the Master's and Doctoral degree levels; however, nearly twice as many females were trained at the Specialist degree level. In terms of year of graduation, the number of males and females graduating before 1984 were nearly equal; however, there were twice as many

females graduating after 1984.

Chi-square analyses were performed to determine if degree level was related to age, service area, and year of graduation. Significant differences were found for age (x^2 = 43.06; df = 8; p<.001) and year of graduation (x^2 = 54.12; df = 2; p<.001). As would be expected there were more school psychologists with Specialist-level degrees in all age groups. There were a greater number of respondents trained at the Master's level prior to 1984 and more with Specialist-level degrees after 1984.

Additional information was gathered for use by the University of Nebraska at Omaha regarding respondents' interest in a Ph. D program in school psychology. Respondents were asked to indicate if they would seek admission to this program. Results indicate the following: absolutely not (N = 116); probably not (N = 106); undecided (N = 74); probably yes (N = 25) and absolutely yes (N = 8).

Sections I (b), (c) and (d) and Sections IV and V of the questionnaire were deleted from the analyses due to the small percentage of subjects responding accurately to these parts of the questionnaire.

Section I

Question One

The first research question addressed in Section I was as follows:

1. Does a relationship exist between the degree held and the quality of graduate training?

Analyses of variance were performed to determine if the subject's level of

education was related to perceptions of quality of training. An analysis of variance was utilized for the three levels of education (Master's, Specialist and Doctoral) and mean ratings of quality of training for each of the sixteen domains. Results of the analysis are presented in Table II. A significant difference between levels of education was found for the research domain only ($F(2, 364) = 5.56$; $p = .004$). Post hoc analyses (Tukey's HSD) indicated that ratings of quality of training in the research domain were higher for Doctoral respondents ($X = 4.34$) than for either Master's ($X = 3.92$) or Specialist ($X = 3.78$) respondents. This finding suggests that research is the only domain of school psychology training in which Doctoral school psychologists believe they are more competently trained.

Question Two

The second question addressed in Section I was the following:

2. Does a relationship exist between quality of graduate training and the year of graduation?

T-test analyses were utilized to determine if quality of training has improved since 1984. Mean ratings of quality of training were compared for two groups; pre-1984 graduates and post-1984 graduates. The results of the t-test comparison, (as well as means, standard deviations, and mean differences) are presented in Table III. Negative mean differences indicate higher ratings of quality of training from those subjects receiving degrees after 1984.

Significant differences were found for basic academic skills ($t = 2.40$; $p = .017$), class management ($t = -2.29$; $p = .023$), classroom organization and social structures ($t = -2.20$; $p = .029$), individual differences in development and

learning ($t = 2.61$; $p = .009$), interpersonal communication and consultation ($t = -3.32$; $p = .001$), legal/ethical and professional issues ($t = -5.93$; $p < .001$), multicultural concerns ($t = -4.35$; $p < .001$), parental involvement ($t = -2.90$; $p = .004$), research ($t = -2.72$; $p = .007$), and systems development and planning ($t = -2.20$; $p = .028$).

The results indicate that ratings of quality of training were higher for those respondents receiving degrees after 1984 for the following areas: class management; classroom organization and social structures; interpersonal communication and consultation; legal/ethical and professional issues; multicultural concerns; parental involvement; research and systems development and planning. For respondents receiving degrees in 1984 or before, ratings of quality of training for basic academic skills and individual differences in development and learning were higher.

Section II

Question Three

3. Does a relationship or congruence exist between the academic quality of training and actual on the job experiences?

In order to determine the congruency between ratings of quality of training and actual practice, comparisons were made for the sixteen domains. For each of the sixteen domains, mean differences were obtained by subtracting the mean rating for training from the respective mean rating for practice. Negative differences indicate more emphasis in practice than in training. A t-test analysis was utilized to assess the statistical significance of the differences for each of the domains. Results of the t-test comparisons, as well as means and standard

deviations, are presented in Table IV.

No significant differences were found between training and practice for the following domains: affective/social skills; assessment; basic academic skills; classroom organization and social structures; instruction; interpersonal communication and consultation; legal/ethical and professional issues; multicultural concerns and personnel development.

Significant differences were found for seven of the sixteen domains: basic life skills ($t = -2.72$; $p = .007$); class management ($t = -1.98$; $p = .048$); individual differences in development and learning ($t = 3.06$; $p = .002$); parental involvement ($t = -3.22$; $p = .001$); research ($t = 5.54$; $p < .001$); school-community relations; ($t = -2.01$; $p = .045$) and systems development and planning ($t = -2.18$; $p = .03$).

Respondents perceived that more emphasis was placed on training in the domains of individual differences in development and learning and research, than was utilized in actual practice. Subjects believed that more emphasis was placed on basic life skills, class management, parental involvement, school-community relations and systems development and planning in actual practice than in training. This suggests that in two out of the sixteen domains, school psychologists perceive that they are more competently trained than they need to be; and in five out of the sixteen domains, they believe more training is needed to be competent for actual on-the-job experiences.

Section III

Question Four

4. How much actual time is devoted to each of the sixteen domains of

school psychology practice and is this related to the ideal amount of time?

A comparison of the actual and ideal percentage of time spent in each of the domains is presented in Table V. A negative mean difference indicates a desire to increase the amount of time spent in that domain. T-test analysis indicated a desire for decreases in the assessment domain ($t = -7.28$; $p < .001$), with significant increases preferred for all other domains--with the exception of basic academic skills ($t = .24$; $p = .810$). Subjects would prefer more time to be spent in domains other than assessment; however, due to the amount of time required for this domain, they are unable to diversify into other areas of practice.

Question Five

5. Does a relationship exist between year of graduation and actual amount of time spent in each domain?

T-test analyses were performed to determine if differences existed between pre-1984 graduates and post-1984 graduates in terms of actual amount of time spent in each of the sixteen domains. Results of the t-test analyses are presented in Table VI. Significant differences were found for basic academic skills ($t = 2.65$; $p = .008$) and interpersonal communication and consultation ($t = -2.86$; $p = .005$). Results suggest that subjects receiving degrees in 1984 or before spend more time in the area of basic academic skills; whereas those receiving degrees in 1985 or after spend more time in the area of interpersonal communication and consultation.

Additional Analyses

A one-way analysis of variance was performed for the three

district/catchment areas (rural, suburban, and urban) and the actual amount of time spent in each of the sixteen domains. Table VII presents the results of this analysis. Three of the sixteen domains showed significant differences in relation to the district/catchment area and were as follows: basic academic skills ($F(2,339) = 3.68$; $p = .026$); class management ($F(2,340) = 6.19$; $p = .002$); and multicultural concerns ($F(2,337) = 13.48$; $p < .001$). Post hoc analyses (Tukey's HSD) indicated that, in the basic academic skills domain, more time was actually spent by rural respondents ($X = 6.58$) than by urban ($X = 4.36$). Both rural ($X = 6.55$) and suburban subjects ($X = 7.52$) spend more time in the class management domain than do urban psychologists ($X = 4.31$). In working with multicultural concerns, urban respondents ($X = 2.50$) devote more time than rural ($X = .81$) and suburban psychologists ($X = 1.30$).

A one-way analysis of variance was performed for the three service areas (rural, suburban and urban) and the ideal amount of time devoted to each of the sixteen domains. Table VIII presents the results of this analysis. Significant differences were found for class management ($F(2,325) = 3.92$; $p = .021$), multicultural concerns ($F(2,322) = 5.70$; $p = .004$), and parental involvement ($F(2,324) = 3.73$; $p = .025$). Post hoc analyses (Tukey's HSD) indicated that, in the basic academic skills domain, rural psychologists ($X = 6.31$) preferred more time to be spent than did urban respondents ($X = 4.53$). Suburban psychologists ($X = 9.13$) preferred more time to be devoted to class management than did rural ($X = 6.86$) or urban subjects ($X = 6.35$). For multicultural concerns, suburban respondents ($X = 2.93$) preferred to devote more time than did rural ($X = 1.54$). Suburban psychologists ($X = 10.52$)

preferred greater increases in parental involvement than did rural psychologists (X = 7.63).

A one-way analysis of variance was performed for years of experience in psychology and the actual amount of time spent in each of the sixteen domains. Year of experience in psychology was categorized according to the following groups: 0-5 years; 6-10 years; 11-15 years; 16-20 years; and 21 years and above. Table VIIII presents the results of this analysis. Significant differences were found for assessment (F (4,340) = 2.51; p = .042), basic academic skills (F(4,338) = 3.86; p = .004), and instruction (F(4,338) = 2.75; p = .028). Post hoc analysis (Tukey's HSD) indicated that, for the assessment domain, respondents with 11-15 years of experience devoted more time (X = 48.59) than did those with 16-20 years of experience (X = 36.83). In the basic academic skills domain, psychologists with more experience (16-20 years; X = 7.94) spent more time than did those respondents with less experience (0-5 years; X = 4.08). Respondents with more experience in psychology (21 years and above) spend less time (X = 1.38) in the instruction domain.

Conclusion

Several limitations of the study deserve mention prior to a summary of the results. The data were collected from practicing school psychologists in two states, Nebraska and Iowa, and may not be representative of all school psychologists in these states or nationwide. The domains of practice for school psychologists were taken from the *Blueprint,* for which the definitions and concepts may have been previously unfamiliar to many respondents (albeit a sheet of definitions was provided to each respondent).

Quality of Training

Research was the only domain in which Doctoral respondents believed that they were more competently trained than Specialist or Master's degree subjects. This is the area in which most emphasis is likely placed in many, if not all, doctoral programs. These results are consistent with findings from Graden et al. (1984) who found that respondents with higher degrees rated the quality of training in research as higher. In addition, this is the domain where respondents indicated that they spent the least amount of time in actual practice ($X = 1.09\%$). These results seem to support that the Specialist degree may be the appropriate entry-level for the field of school psychology. In order for the Doctoral degree to be beneficial, graduate training programs may need to diversify to include additional areas of school psychology practice such as those outlined in the *Blueprint.*

Higher ratings of quality of training for graduates after 1984 were found for many of the domains including: class management; classroom organization and social structures; interpersonal communication and consultation; legal/ethical and professional issues; multicultural concerns; parental involvement; research; and systems development and planning. This suggests that the revised NASP standards and the *Blueprint* may have exerted an impact on improving the quality of training received by school psychologists. However, this improvement is displayed in only one-half of the sixteen domains and the quality of training in the other areas needs to be taken into consideration.

Congruence Between Training and Practice

Congruence between training and practice was found for almost one-half of

the sixteen domains. These domains included: affective/social skills; assessment; basic academic skills; classroom organization and social structures; instruction; interpersonal communication and consultation; legal/ethical and professional issues; multicultural concerns; and personnel development. Many of the other domains were emphasized more in practice than in training: basic life skills; class management; parental involvement; school-community relations; and systems development and planning. Two of the domains were emphasized more in training than was deemed necessary for practice: individual differences in development and learning and research. The results of Fisher et al. (1984), a replication of Meacham and Peckham (1978), indicated that greater congruency between training and practice was found on all 25 skill variables surveyed. When compared to the findings of the present study, it would appear that certain areas of graduate training deserve greater emphasis while others could receive less. Practitioners perceive certain areas of practice to be emphasized more in practice than in training. Therefore, it may be necessary to modify graduate training programs in order to provide school psychologists with the skills that appear to be necessary to carry out these services.

Actual versus Ideal Amount of Time Spent in Each Domain

Results indicate that school psychologists continue to spend the majority of their time in assessment (X= 42.11%) and prefer to decrease the time devoted to this area, as this would allow them to diversify into other areas of practice. The general patterns which emerge regarding the activities performed by school psychologists in their professional practices will potentially provide

norms for the entire profession. The perceptions and beliefs of school psychologists regarding their role and functions may also have an impact on the defining features of the profession.

For fifteen years or more, practitioners have been reporting a preference to decrease the amount of time spent in assessment so they would be able to devote more time to other areas of practice. In order for school psychologists to be competent in providing services in these additional areas, graduate programs may need to prioritize the components of the training that they provide to meet the changing demands of the profession.

The major emphasis in Specialist-level training on assessment may be one of the key reasons why school psychologists continue to engage primarily in this activity. By providing quality graduate training in alternative domains of the profession (such as pre-referral activities and interventions, teacher and parent consultation, effective classroom interventions, life skills, and systems development and planning) school psychologists will be empowered to be more effective in performing diverse functions. As a result, many of the assessment activities may be eliminated, thereby providing continuing support for additional school psychological services.

Summary

Further research is warranted in this area; however, it will be important to continue to gather data on the expanded roles and functions of school psychologist (ie. the domains outlined in the 1984 *Blueprint*) to determine if other areas are receiving emphasis in training and practice. In addition, a shift in graduate training programs is necessary if school psychologists are to be

involved in providing comprehensive services outside of the traditional activities of the profession.

Transformation in the training and practices of school psychologists will be difficult to achieve unless the professional organizations that influence the profession notably, APA and NASP, are able to agree on "what", "where" and "how" to change. Without the support and collaboration of these two key organizations the profession of school psychology may experience growth and development in contradictory directions resulting in dissatisfaction with the services being provided.

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Table I: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	N	%
Gender		
Male	156	42.3
Female	213	57.7
Highest Degree Held		
Master's	135	36.4
Specialist	186	50.1
Doctorate	50	13.5
Major		
School Psychology	294	79.2
Educational Psychology	48	12.9
Experimental Psychology	13	3.5
Counseling	6	1.6
Guidance	3	.81
Special Education	3	.81
Clinical Psychology	2	.54
Behavior Science	1	.32
Psychometry	1	.32
District/Catchment Area		
Rural	197	52.7
Suburban	77	20.6
Urban	100	26.7
Certification Status		
Full	332	88.1
Provisional	43	11.4
None	2	.5
Employment Status		
Full-time	311	88.6
Part-time	40	11.4

Average Age (in years) = 42.68
Age Range = 25-71 years
Average School Psychology Experience (in years) = 11.95
Year of Graduation (range) =1954-1995
Number of Training Institutions = 67

Table II: Mean Ratings for Each Domain by Education Level

DOMAIN	Master's	Specialist	Doctorate
Affective/Social Skills	3.34	3.32	3.60
Assessment	4.64	4.60	4.56
Basic Academic Skills	3.67	3.75	4.02
Basic Life Skills	3.00	3.10	3.06
Class Management	3.16	3.31	3.16
Classroom Organization and Social Structures	3.05	3.16	3.16
Individual Differences in Development and Learning	4.14	4.05	4.30
Instruction	2.92	3.10	3.20
Interpersonal Communication and Consultation	3.86	4.06	3.74
Legal/Ethical and Professional Issues	3.80	3.99	3.70
Multicultural Concerns	3.13	3.10	3.24
Parental Involvement	3.36	3.50	3.56
Personnel Development	3.34	3.49	3.32
*Research	3.79	3.92	4.34
School-Community Relations	3.08	3.22	3.24
Systems Development and Planning	2.85	3.08	3.00

*Statistically significant at the .05 level

Table III: Mean Ratings of Quality of Training for Each Domain by Year of Graduation

DOMAIN	Pre-1984		Post-1984		
	X	S.D.	X	S.D.	Mean Difference
Affective/Social Skills	3.35	1.16	3.38	1.17	-.03
Assessment	4.64	.56	4.56	.69	.08
Basic Academic Skills	3.91	.94	3.65	1.09	.26*
Basic Life Skills	2.98	1.04	3.13	1.03	-.15
Class Management	3.10	1.17	3.38	1.18	-.28*
Classroom Organization and Social Structures	2.99	1.11	3.24	1.11	-.25*
Individual Differences in Development and Learning	4.24	.81	4.00	.96	.24**
Instruction	3.04	1.09	3.06	1.05	-.02
Interpersonal Communication and Consultation	3.76	1.16	4.13	.95	-.81**
Legal/Ethical and Professional Issues	3.58	1.11	4.19	.82	-.61**
Multicultural Concerns	2.86	1.17	3.40	1.18	-.54**
Parental Involvement	3.29	1.14	3.63	1.05	-.34**
Personnel Development	3.34	1.17	3.47	1.10	-.13
Research	3.78	1.08	4.07	.90	-.29**
School-Community Relations	3.11	1.15	3.21	1.05	-.10
Systems Development and Planning	2.85	1.16	3.11	1.14	-.26*

*Statistically significant at the .05 level

**Statistically significant at the .01 level

Note. Negative mean differences indicate higher ratings of quality of training from those respondents receiving degrees after 1984.

Table IV: Mean Ratings of Quality of Training and Practice for Each Domain

DOMAIN	Training		Practice		
	X	S.D.	X	S.D.	Mean Difference
Affective/Social Skills	3.37	1.17	3.43	1.17	-.06
Assessment	4.60	.63	4.54	.69	.06*
Basic Academic Skills	3.77	1.04	3.74	1.13	.03
Basic Life Skills	3.07	1.03	3.20	1.08	-.13**
Class Management	3.24	1.19	3.33	1.23	-.09*
Classroom Organization and Social Structures	3.12	1.12	3.21	1.16	-.09
Individual Differences in Development and Learning	4.12	.89	3.99	.97	.13**
Instruction	3.05	1.08	3.13	1.12	-.08
Interpersonal Communication and Consultation	3.94	1.07	3.91	1.05	.03
Legal/Ethical and Professional Issues	3.89	1.01	3.82	1.07	.07
Multicultural Concerns	3.14	1.20	3.18	1.21	-.04
Parental Involvement	3.47	1.11	3.62	1.13	-.15**
Personnel Development	3.42	1.12	3.33	1.16	.09
Research	3.94	.98	3.66	1.10	.98**
School-Community Relations	3.19	1.09	3.28	1.13	-.09*
Systems Development and Planning	3.01	1.15	3.10	1.14	-.09*

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.
**Statistically significant at the .01 level.
Note. Negative mean differences indicate more emphasis in practice than in training.

Table V: Mean Percentage of Actual and Ideal Time Spent in Each Domain

DOMAIN	Actual Time		Ideal Time		
	X	S.D.	X	S.D.	Mean Difference
Affective/Social Skills	7.67	7.97	11.22	10.53	-3.55**
Assessment	42.11	20.05	24.68	13.42	17.42**
Basic Academic Skills	5.75	6.56	5.69	5.77	.06
Basic Life Skills	2.34	3.12	3.37	4.07	-1.03**
Class Management	6.11	6.28	7.22	6.64	-1.10**
Classroom Organization and Social Structures	2.10	2.90	3.35	4.00	-1.24**
Individual Differences in Development and Learning	4.78	6.39	5.38	6.61	-.60*
Instruction	2.12	3.02	3.01	4.14	-.89**
Interpersonal Communication and Consultation	12.04	10.62	14.14	11.89	-2.10**
Legal/Ethical and Professional Issues	2.46	3.62	2.13	2.67	.33*
Multicultural Concerns	1.33	2.63	2.05	3.18	-.72**
Parental Involvement	5.90	5.83	8.41	7.50	-2.51**
Personnel Development	1.67	2.88	2.65	3.60	-.98**
Research	1.09	2.38	2.48	3.41	-1.39**
School-Community Relations	1.99	3.30	2.69	3.64	-.70**
Systems Development and Planning	1.84	3.26	2.85	4.12	-1.01**

*Statistically significant at the .05 level. **Statistically significant at the .01 level.

Note. Negative mean differences indicate a preference for more time to be spent in that particular domain.

Table VI: Mean Percentages of Actual Amount of Time Spent in Each Domain by Year of Graduation

Domain	Pre-1984		Post-1984		
	X	S.D.	X	S.D.	Mean Difference
Affective/Social Skills	7.19	7.39	8.03	8.57	-.84
Assessment	41.91	20.00	41.43	19.93	.48
Basic Academic Skills	6.79	7.25	4.88	5.80	1.91*
Basic Life Skills	2.63	3.65	2.11	2.79	.52
Class Management	6.35	6.83	6.14	5.96	.21
Classroom Organization and Social Structures	1.96	2.78	2.27	3.05	-.31
Individual Differences in Development and Learning	5.25	6.75	4.36	6.01	.89
Instruction	2.35	3.73	2.13	2.68	.22
Interpersonal Communication and Consultation	10.23	10.53	13.49	10.43	-3.26*
Legal/Ethical and Professional Issues	2.42	3.75	2.47	3.50	-.05
Multicultural Concerns	1.53	2.77	1.27	2.62	.26
Parental Involvement	6.44	6.68	5.77	5.31	.67
Personnel Development	1.59	2.68	1.73	2.96	-.14
Research	1.11	2.84	.99	1.78	.12
School-Community Relations	2.31	4.04	1.82	2.48	.49
Systems Development and Planning	1.96	3.38	1.81	3.16	.15

*Statistically significant at the .05 level

Table VII: Mean Percentage of Actual Time for Each Domain by District/Catchment Area

DOMAIN	Rural	Suburban	Urban
Affective/Social Skills	7.50	8.51	7.34
Assessment	41.33	38.80	45.23
*Basic Academic Skills	6.58	5.46	4.36
Basic Life Skills	2.39	2.23	2.37
**Class Management	6.55	7.52	4.31
Classroom Organization and Social Structures	2.25	2.30	1.67
Individual Differences in Development and Learning	4.74	5.10	4.60
Instruction	2.23	2.07	2.08
Interpersonal Communication and Consultation	11.26	13.76	12.09
Legal/Ethical and Professional Issues	2.49	2.58	2.28
**Multicultural Concerns	.81	1.30	2.50
Parental Involvement	5.61	7.39	5.76
Personnel Development	1.73	1.80	1.45
Research	1.06	1.41	.78
School-Community Relations	2.06	2.17	1.95
Systems Development and Planning	1.93	2.11	1.66

*Statistically significant at the .05 level
**Statistically significant at the .01 level

Table VIII: Mean Percentage of Ideal Time for Each Domain by District/Catchment Area

DOMAIN	Rural	Suburban	Urban
Affective/Social Skills	11.07	11.22	11.64
Assessment	24.19	23.91	26.21
Basic Academic Skills	6.31	5.70	4.53
Basic Life Skills	3.24	3.29	2.69
*Class Management	6.86	9.13	6.35
Classroom Organization and Social Structures	3.14	4.26	3.06
Individual Differences in Development and Learning	5.33	5.81	5.16
Instruction	2.97	3.59	2.69
Interpersonal Communication and Consultation	13.28	15.87	14.96
Legal/Ethical and Professional Issues	2.24	1.94	2.08
**Multicultural Concerns	1.54	2.13	2.93
*Parental Involvement	7.63	10.52	8.16
Personnel Development	2.83	2.71	2.31
Research	2.25	3.26	2.33
School-Community Relations	2.52	2.72	2.93
Systems Development and Planning	2.64	2.75	3.36

*Statistically significant at the .05 level

**Statistically significant at the .01 level

Table VIIII: Mean Ratings for Each Domain by Years of Experience in Psychology

DOMAIN	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5
Affective/Social Skills	7.38	7.59	6.67	8.36	8.38
*Assessment	42.03	41.41	48.59	36.83	41.44
**Basic Academic Skills	4.08	6.56	7.09	7.44	5.54
Basic Life Skills	2.10	2.03	1.98	2.70	3.17
Class Management	6.41	5.70	6.65	6.33	5.29
Classroom Organization and Social Structures	2.56	1.85	1.49	1.91	2.17
Individual Differences in Development and Learning	3.77	5.43	5.23	4.98	5.58
*Instruction	2.11	2.21	1.91	3.24	1.38
Interpersonal Communication and Consultation	13.87	12.23	10.13	10.58	10.83
Legal/Ethical and Professional Issues	2.79	1.80	1.77	3.14	2.10
Multicultural Concerns	1.39	1.20	1.21	1.26	1.98
Parental Involvement	5.30	6.57	6.62	5.40	7.33
Personnel Development	1.86	1.25	1.00	1.98	1.88
Research	1.16	.67	.81	1.09	1.38
School-Community Relations	1.71	2.21	2.81	1.77	2.31
Systems Development and Planning	1.98	1.74	1.45	2.51	1.65

*Statistically significant at the .05 level

**Statistically significant at the .01 level

Note. Years of experience in psychology was divided into the following groups: Group 1 = 0-5 years; Group 2 = 6-10 years; Group 3 = 11-15 years; Group 4 = 16-20 years and Group 5 = 21 years and above.

QUESTIONNAIRE ON SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING AND PRACTICE

Age (to nearest year): _____ Gender (male or female): _____

From where have you received graduate-level degrees:

University/College	Major	Degree	Year Received
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Which of the following best describes your district/catchment area:
_____ Rural _____ Suburban _____ Urban

Years of Work Experience in Education and/or Psychology (as of June, 1995) _____

Years of Work Experience in School Psychology Specifically (as of June, 1995) _____

Certification in School Psychology (Check one):
Full _____ Provisional _____ None _____

Are you currently employed as a School Psychologist (Check one):
Yes _____ No _____

If yes, Full-time or Part Time: _____

If not employed as a school psychologist, are you currently employed in another position (check one): Not at all _____ Part time _____ Full time _____
If you checked either Part of Full time employed, please indicate the type of employment and title: _____

For all ratings in **Sections I and II**, please use the following five-point method:

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inadequate	**Inadequate**	**Undecided**	**Adequate**	**Very Adequate**

Section I. (a) Please **rate** the **academic quality** of your **School Psychology training** for each of the areas (place only one rating on each blank line; if you were trained at more than one university, use a combined rating):

	Rating
• Affective/Social Skills	_____
• Assessment	_____
• Basic Academic Skills	_____
• Basic Life Skills	_____
• Class Management	_____
• Classroom Organization and Social Structures	_____
• Individual Differences in Development and Learning	_____
• Instruction	_____
• Interpersonal Communication and Consultation	_____
• Legal/Ethical and Professional Issues	_____
• Multicultural Concerns	_____
• Parental Involvement	_____
• Personal Development	_____
• Research	_____
• School-Community Relations	_____
• Systems Development and Planning	_____

Please Turn to Next Page

(b) Please rate **the quality** of your: Practicums _____ Internship _____

(c) Please rate the **amount of time** allowed for: Practicums: _____ Internship _____

(d) Please rate your **overall graduate training in School Psychology:** _____

Section II. Given what you have **actually experienced "on the job"** as a School Psychologist, please rate each of the following areas according to the **practical adequacy of your School Psychology training** (place only one rating on each blank line):

	Rating
• Affective/Social Skills	_____
• Assessment	_____
• Basic Academic Skills	_____
• Basic Life Skills	_____
• Class Management	_____
• Classroom Organization and Social Structures	_____
• Individual Differences in Development and Learning	_____
• Instruction	_____
• Interpersonal Communication and Consultation	_____
• Legal/Ethical and Professional Issues	_____
• Multicultural Concerns	_____
• Parental Involvement	_____
• Personnel Development	_____
• Research	_____
• School-Community Relations	_____
• Systems Development and Planning	_____

Are there other areas that you feel are important to your job? If so, Specify:

_____

_____

Section III. Assign a **percentage** to each area below according to the **amount of time** that you have **actually spent** as a School Psychologist as compared to what you believe should be the **ideal time** (be sure each column totals 100%):

	Actual	Ideal
• Affective/Social Skills	_____	_____
• Assessment	_____	_____
• Basic Academic Skills	_____	_____
• Basic Life Skills	_____	_____
• Class Management	_____	_____
• Classroom Organization and Social Structures	_____	_____
• Individual Differences in Development and Learning	_____	_____
• Instruction	_____	_____
• Interpersonal Communication and Consultation	_____	_____
• Legal/Ethical and Professional Issues	_____	_____
• Multicultural Concerns	_____	_____
• Parental Involvement	_____	_____
• Personnel Development	_____	_____
• Research	_____	_____
• School-Community Relations	_____	_____
• Systems Development and Planning	_____	_____
Total	**100%**	**100%**

Please Turn To Next Page

Section IV. This section should be **completed by only those respondents holding a doctoral degree relevant to School Psychology:**

a) Please indicate your **doctoral major** (check only one):

- Clinical Psychology _____
- Counseling Psychology _____
- Curriculum _____
- Education Administration _____
- School Psychology _____
- Special Education _____
- Teacher Education _____
- Other (Please Specify) _____

b) When compared to your sixth-year level of training, how much **additional competency in School Psychology** did you gain from your doctoral program:

None _____ Some _____ A Great Deal _____

Section V. This section should be **completed only by those respondents not holding a doctoral degree relevant to School Psychology.**

a) Are you presently pursuing doctoral studies: Yes _____ No _____

b) Do you seriously plan on eventually earning a doctoral degree:

Yes _____ No _____ Undecided _____

c) If you answered "b" with either a "Yes" or "Undecided," please indicate your preferred major (place a "1" by your first choice and a "2" by your second choice; indicate only two choices):

- Clinical Psychology _____
- Counseling Psychology _____
- Curriculum _____
- Education Administration _____
- School Psychology _____
- Special Education _____
- Teacher Education _____
- Other (Please Specify) _____

Section VI. If the University of Nebraska at Omaha's Department of Psychology offered a Ph. D. program in School Psychology, what would be the likelihood that you would seek admission to it (check one):

Absolutely Not	**Probably Not**	**Undecided**	**Probably Yes**	**Absolutely Yes**
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Please Return to: Ms. Jennifer Davenport & Dr. Robert Woody, Department of Psychology, University of Nebraska at Omaha, 347 Arts & Sciences Building, 60th and Dodge Street, Omaha, NE 68182

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION WITH THIS STUDY. We will mail you a summary of the results.

THE RECOMMENDED DOMAINS OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY LEADERSHIP AND FUNCTION IN THE SCHOOLS

Affective/Social Skills. School psychologists should be prepared to give leadership in developing instructional programs for students and to conduct instruction in dealing with special problems of affective development and social skills. They should demonstrate knowledge of major systems for teaching affective and social skills and providing deliberate psychological education for students.

Assessment. School psychologists should be competent in collecting data for the purpose of verifying and specifying school related problems, and for the purpose of making decisions about individuals or groups.

Basic Academic Skills. The school psychologist should be knowledgeable about and prepared to offer consultation on major theories of learning, research on teaching basic skills, research on study skills and practices, and research on factors related to meta-cognitive aspects of basic skills. The school psychologist can be expected to know the types of family behaviors, teaching behaviors and administrative practices that are related to mastery of basic skills. School psychologists should be able to help teachers help students master basics skills in reading, writing, mathematics, speaking, and listening.

Basic Life Skills. School psychologists should be prepared to offer assistance to school personnel in designing curricula to develop adaptive behavior, functional life skills, and vocational orientation skills. They should know the organizational and theoretical principle related to teaching basic life skills, and should know the measurement and assessment principles needed to evaluate competency in these areas.

Class Management. The school psychologist should be knowledgeable about class management procedures as a basis for consultation with and training of school staff. At least the following specific topics should be included in the preservice education and competencies of school psychologists: knowledge of alternative approaches to student discipline, knowledge of ecological approaches to class management, including management of the individual students and groups, knowledge of the research on classroom climate, knowledge of research on managing classes at the beginning of a school year, skill in dealing with crisis situations like fights and assaults.

Classroom Organization and Social Structures. The school psychologist should be prepared to offer consultation and training on classroom organizational structures including: cooperative goal structuring, use of peer and cross-age tutoring, accommodating and motivating students with diverse characteristics in classroom environments, and supervision and use of classroom aides and volunteers.

Individual Differences in Development and Learning. The school psychologist should be prepared to participate in the assessment of individual students and their life situations. He/she should be able to advise on the development of adapted instructional programs for handicapped students, including all ranges of severity, types and ages, gifted and talented students, and students from different cultures and subcultures.

Instruction. The school psychologist should be prepared to advise and consult on matters relating to the general improvement of instruction. School psychologists can be expected to be knowledgeable about systematic application of principles of learning to instruction. They should know much about teaching effectiveness and about ways to increase students' academic engaged time. They should be able to apply direct instruction techniques.

Interpersonal Communication and Consultation. School psychologists should be prepared to offer consultation and training on general approaches to high level, quality professional communication, including that involved in the "teaming" process, use of consultation procedures, both as consultant and consultee, use of positive interpersonal skills.

Legal/Ethical and Professional Issues. School psychologists should be prepared to practice in the schools in ways which meet all appropriate ethical, professional and legal standards as a way of enhancing the quality of services and protecting the rights of all parties. They should adhere to due process guidelines in all major decisions affecting students, adhere to all legal requirements, as in response to law and court decisions.

Multicultural Concerns. More than ever before, students enrolled in today's schools come from a variety of cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. There is much information in the psychological literature on effectively working with diverse cultural groups. School psychologists can be expected to have this knowledge and to use it to promote effective functioning.

Parental Involvement. The school psychologist should be prepared to help design and operate programs involving school-family contacts. School psychologists can be expected to conduct formal parent education programs and to help establish problem-oriented drop-in centers and "hotlines" to assist parents. They can be expected to educate parents for IEP participation and to help develop programs for collaborative curriculum planning with parents. School psychologists should be able to conduct parent and family counseling on students' special learning and behavior problems.

Personnel Development. The school psychologist should be prepared to consult and assist in conducting staff selection and development processes, including designing role or job specifications, designing staff selection, monitoring and evaluation programs, and designing and carrying out staff development activities, including needs assessment and training.

Research. The school psychologist should be knowledgeable of research design, measurement and statistics. School psychologists should be prepared to provide leadership in research activities in their schools. They should have competence in consulting and advising on needed research, advising and supporting others doing research, negotiating with external agencies and securing funding for research, and directly conducting research on selected topics.

School-Community Relations. The school psychologist should be prepared to help provide leadership in coordinating school and community programs and to serve as liaison, where appropriate, with other agencies such as hospitals and rehabilitation centers, mental health clinics, family-serving agencies, corrections agencies, etc.

Systems Development and Planning. The school psychologist should be prepared to participate in the development and operation of broad systems approaches to instruction. School psychologists should be able to give leadership in developing systems for integrating assessment and instructional activities that help to meet the needs of students at all levels of ability and that provide for continuous progress across grade and school levels. School psychologists also should be of assistance to school personnel in evaluating instructional systems, including use of formal and informal approaches to evaluation and planned change.

University of Nebraska at Omaha

College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Psychology
Omaha, Nebraska 68182-0274
(402) 554-2592

March 8, 1995

Dear

Since school psychologists' functions are changing and expanding, we need your opinions about school psychology training and practice. Enclosed is a questionnaire (along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope).

Since we are contacting relatively few school psychologists, **your personal views are of great importance to the overall project.**

Note that the code number on the questionnaire is solely for the purpose of tabulating data: **Your responses will be kept confidential.**

If you are unsure of any definition, a reference sheet is enclosed.

Since time is of the essence, we will appreciate your completing and returning the questionnaire promptly -- hopefully no later than March 31, 1995.

Your help will be greatly appreciated.

Cordially,

Jennifer

Jennifer L. Davenport
School Psychologist
Iowa AEA 5

Bob

Robert H. Woody
Professor of Psychology and
Director of School Psychology Training

University of Nebraska at Omaha

College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Psychology
Omaha, Nebraska 68182-0274
(402) 554-2592

April 5, 1995

Dear

Approximately three weeks ago you received a questionnaire regarding your opinions about school psychology training and practice. Your response is of great importance to our project. Thus, at this time we are following up with a second questionnaire (along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope) to provide you with an opportunity to express your views.

Note that the code number on the questionnaire is solely for the purpose of tabulating data: **Your responses will be kept confidential.**

If you are unsure of any definition, a reference sheet is enclosed.

Since time is of the essence, we will appreciate your completing and returning the questionnaire promptly--hopefully no later than April 28, 1995.

Your help will be greatly appreciated.

Cordially,

Jennifer

Jennifer L. Davenport
School Psychologist
Iowa AEA 5

Bob

Robert H. Woody
Professor of Psychology and
Director of School Psychology Training

University of Nebraska at Omaha

College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Psychology
Omaha, Nebraska 68182-0274
(402) 554-2592

May 3, 1995

Dear

We have twice sent you a questionnaire regarding your opinions about school psychology training and practice. We realize that this takes time away from your busy schedule; however, your response is of great importance to our project. Thus, at this time we are following up with another questionnaire (along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope) to provide you with an opportunity to express your views.

Note that the code number on the questionnaire is solely for the purpose of tabulating data: **Your responses will be kept confidential.**

If you are unsure of any definition, a reference sheet is enclosed.

Since time is of the essence, we will appreciate your completing and returning the questionnaire promptly--hopefully no later than May 26, 1995.

Your help will be greatly appreciated.

Cordially,

Jennifer

Jennifer L. Davenport
School Psychologist
Iowa AEA 5

Bob

Robert H. Woody
Professor of Psychology and
Director of School Psychology Training